



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Southeast Region****SOUTHEASTERN CURRENTS***

AUGUST 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge, located on the beautiful island of St. Croix and, has the longest stretch and greatest area of sandy beach in the U.S. Virgin Islands. At a mere almost 400 acres, Sandy Point is one of the smaller refuges in the United States, but it plays a very important role in the conservation of the critically endangered leatherback sea turtle. Sandy Point hosts the largest continuously studied population of nesting leatherback sea turtles in the world. Much of what is known about the species is the result of research and monitoring that has occurred as part of the Sandy Point Leatherback Sea Turtle Recovery Program.

Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1984 to protect endangered leatherback sea turtles. Flipper tagging began in 1977 and since 1981 saturation tagging (the tagging of every turtle that comes ashore) and consistent night patrols have yielded a comprehensive data base of information on each female turtle nesting on the refuge. This data base is critical for monitoring the recovery of the species and tracking the results of management efforts.

World-wide populations of leatherback turtles are drastically declining and are considered to be at serious risk of global extinction. In contrast, the Sandy Point population has steadily increased over the last 30 years. Only 10 female leatherback turtles were recorded at Sandy Point during the 1977 nesting season. At the end of the 2007 season, 193 female leatherback turtles had laid 989 nests on that very same stretch of beach. The increase is most likely a result of intensive long-term conservation and management activities.

From April to August, The Sandy Point Leatherback Sea Turtle Recovery Program patrols the entire beach hourly from dusk to dawn in search of nesting females. During these patrols every nesting activity is recorded, and every leatherback encountered is tagged. Long term saturation tagging allows for an accurate estimate of the Sandy Point population and enables trends in that population to be tracked over time.

Sadly, poaching of both turtles and eggs on unprotected Virgin Island beaches continues to be a problem. The 30-year presence of researchers on hourly patrols and the more recent Refuge law enforcement presence have virtually eliminated poaching at Sandy



Leatherback sea turtle returning to the sea. Photo by Claudia Lombard.

Point. In addition to the decrease in poaching activities and the long term saturation tagging at Sandy Point, perhaps the single most important contribution the program provides is the relocation of “doomed” nests. The beach at Sandy Point is highly dynamic, but also very predictable. Every season an average of 33 percent of all nests are deemed as “doomed” and would be lost to beach erosion if not for the efforts of the researchers to relocate egg clutches to stable beach areas. Beach protection and egg relocation appear to provide a simple and effective recovery tool.

Since 1997, the refuge's Turtle Watch Education Program has allowed thousands of schoolchildren and local adults to visit Sandy Point. Participants get the opportunity to observe nesting females and emerging hatchlings while learning about The Sandy Point Leatherback Recovery Program. The Turtle Watch Program allows the community to become an integral part of the protection of sea turtles and their habitats. In doing so, it fosters a conservation ethic that permeates the community and is paramount for sea turtle conservation.

Submitted by Claudia Lombard, Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Behind the Scenes--

Americorp volunteers help clear savanna for cranes



Biologist Lauren Billodeaux and the four Americorp volunteers.
Photo by Emily Neidigh.

Four Americorp volunteers volunteered to work on July 7, 2008 - - their day off! The young people helped Emily Neidigh, park ranger at Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge, remove new or unburned pine trees from more than 150 acres of a prescribed-burned refuge savanna. Since this savanna was burned earlier this year, biology interns saw the endangered Mississippi Sandhill Crane feeding in the newly opened area. With the fuels reduced, toothache grass and meadow beauty wildflowers now dominate the open savanna. Removing the remaining pines will hopefully further encourage the cranes to use the savanna.

Submitted by Emily Neidigh, Gulf Coast National Wildlife Refuge, Gautier, Mississippi

Cub Scout Summer Camp at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Brunswick, Georgia, Ecological Services Office teamed up this summer to present "World Conservation Wednesday" at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base during a week-long Cub Scout Summer Camp in June. Staff, volunteers, and interns used confiscated products made from endangered species to teach the kids about the importance of conservation. The Cub Scouts were informed about how refuges help animals and why they are necessary. Everyone participated in an activity called Food for the Brood, where each child learned about the difficulties of being a bird trying to feed its young. The volunteers magically transformed one of the younger attendees into an alligator during an exercise called "How to Dress an Alligator." This program teaches adaptation advantages the alligators have acquired over time in their watery environment. Participants received posters, wetland coloring books, and lots of other cool information about wildlife conservation.



Bill Wilkoff shows an endangered Hawksbill sea turtle shell to curious boys. Photo by Dan Ashworth.

Submitted by Travis Drury and Sallie Gentry, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Folkston, Georgia

Bragging Rights --



Jeremy Nguyen, AGFC, and Shorty spent the morning swapping stories. Photo by: Karen Graves.

Cache River staff helps nursing home residents make memories

What images come to mind when you think back to some of the best days of your life? For residents of the Woodruff County Health Center in Arkansas most of those images involved good friends, telling stories, and fishing! Cache River National Wildlife Refuge and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission teamed up to give the residents of Woodruff County Health Center a fishing trip to the refuge's Miller Pond on June 19. Karen Graves of Central Arkansas Refuges and Jimmy Barnett with the Fisheries Division of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission worked together to obtain tackle and bait. Waivers for fishing licenses were granted, and Special Use Permits were signed. Michelle Holder, activities director, of Woodruff County Health Center chose six residents for the first Woodruff County Health Center Fishing Day.

Equipment Operator Billy Culbreath, Volunteer Dillion Dewitt, and Office Assistant Karen Graves of Cache River NWR and Jeremy Nguyen of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission staffed the event. The six nursing home residents, Johnny, Shorty, Agnes, Bonnie, Lessie, and Marcella, caught fish faster than we could take them off and re-bait the hooks. Agnes taught Billy the fine art of casting, Shorty told a few "the one that got away" stories, Johnny outfished us all, and Bonnie thought it was the best day she'd had in years!

"Even though I left the pond smelling of a stink bait/chicken liver cocktail and had sweat dripping from my ear lobes, I can honestly say that day was the best I've ever had "at work," said Karen Graves. "Days like that make me especially proud to wear the Service

uniform. We made a real difference!" More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Karen Graves, Central Arkansas Refuges, Augusta, Arkansas

Gone fishin'

On June 7, more than 150 children enjoyed a hot, summer morning reeling in the big ones from Miller Pond at Cache National Wildlife Refuge. Fishing Derby participants ranged in age from 18 months to 12 years old. Most participants lived in the surrounding counties, but a few came from more than 100 miles away just to fish with us. Local merchants were generous and donated prizes, so each child left with a great gift, a certificate of participation, and a stinger of yummy catfish. This is the sixth youth fishing derby at Cache River National Wildlife Refuge. In addition to the derby, Miller Pond was available to "Youth Only" fishing the entire weekend giving all area youth an opportunity to enjoy! More photos in [Photo Album](#).



Great Crowd. Photo by Brandon McNew (son of Karen Graves).

Submitted by Karen Graves, Central Arkansas Refuges, Augusta, Arkansas



Administrative section of the new building. Photo by Chuck Ryan.

New administration and visitors center building to open at Loxahatchee NWR

After Hurricane Wilma in October 2005, the employees of Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge became gypsy wanderers. When Wilma destroyed the administration building and seriously damaged the visitors center, the biology building, then just being finished, suddenly became the administration/biology building. That building had to provide office space for seven staff members, and three public use personnel were forced to find new homes. In May 2007, construction began on a new, single-combined structure. On June 9, 2008, the first furniture was delivered and set up in the new building.

Almost half of the new building is dedicated as the visitors center. The center will have a reception area, a gift store, an auditorium, and a large exhibit area. The Marshall Foundation and the Friends of Loxahatchee raised the funds for the new exhibits that should be in place by November 2008, in time for the official Grand Opening. A visitor will be able to take a virtual airboat ride and hear the night sounds of the Everglades, as well as view exhibits about conservation, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the flora and fauna of the Everglades. Movies about Loxahatchee and the Everglades will be shown in the auditorium.

The administration portion of the building will provide much more comfort for employees than our temporary quarters. The biologists are especially happy as they will finally be getting their building – only three years late.



Complete west face of the new building. Photo by Chuck Ryan.

Submitted by Chuck Ryan, Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Boynton Beach, Florida



L to R: Steve Holzman, USFWS; Sam Wheeler, GDOT engineer; Wes King, GDOT engineer, and Jimmy Rickard, USFWS. They are holding plants rescued from transportation project. Photo by Pete Pattavina.

Balancing act: watershed and endangered species protection requires choices between resources

The saying “there is no such thing as a free lunch” resounded loudly for the Georgia Ecological Services Field Office last spring during implementation of the flagship conservation tool, the proposed Etowah Habitat Conservation Plan (www.etowahhcp.org). Stormwater infiltration ponds, constructed to lessen negative impacts to the threatened Cherokee darter by processing up to four inches of runoff from 20 acres of highway lanes and ramps, increased the project’s footprint considerably. A botanically-rich forest fragment blanketed with trilliums, foam flower, dog-tooth violets, and dwarf-crested irises was destroyed. Service Biologists Pete Pattavina, Jimmy Rickard, and Steve Holzman, with the help of

Georgia Department of Transportation engineers Wes King and Sam Wheeler, rescued hundreds of plants from forest slopes, just days before the area was bulldozed. All of the rescued plants were taken to the Macon Museum of Arts and Sciences. The Museum is working under a Partners for Fish and Wildlife grant to restore a hardwood forest habitat overtaken by invasive species. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Pete Pattavina, Georgia Ecological Services Field Office, Athens, Georgia

Scouts fascinated with wildlife and plants on educational nature hike

Talks of manatees, tortoises, and mosquito fish permeated the muggy, yet fun-filled air at Camp Oklawaha on June 12, as Trish Adams led a cadre of scouts on an educational nature hike. Trish Adams was clearly in her element as she hiked through portions of the 75-acre camp with the first of five separate groups of scouts at the camp near Sebastian, Florida. She escorted each group around the camp discussing Florida’s ecology, topography, flora, fish, and wildlife.

“I believe it is important for children to experience and appreciate nature,” said Trish, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s South Florida Ecological Services Office in Vero Beach. “We’ve got to teach them to respect wildlife.”

The highlights of the hike for many of the scouts appeared to be when Trish gathered them on a bridge when crossing a tributary to the St. Sebastian River to tell them about Gambusia fish. “They’re also called mosquito fish. That popping sound you hear is them eating mosquito larvae,” she said to hushed “oohs and ahhs.”

The Scouts also enjoyed it when Trish showed them a gopher tortoise peeking from its burrow and when she showed them a beauty plant, which was used by Native Americans to make war paint. As a precaution, Trish also showed them a poison ivy plant, making eight-year-old Sam Mudd proclaim, “I knew that. I know my poisons.”



Trish Adams shows scouts a gopher tortoise’s burrow. Photo by Ken Warren.

"Nature hikes are awesome experiences for these kids," said Den Leader Lori Bloom. "We loved it and really appreciate Trish for taking time to make it so much fun."

Submitted by Ken Warren, South Florida Ecological Services Field Office, Vero Beach, Florida



Okaloosa Darter. Photo by Bill Tate

Service and Eglin Air Force Base work together to recover Okaloosa darter

For about two years, Staff from the Fish and Wildlife Service and Eglin Air Force Base have been evaluating the water quality of East Turkey Creek and its effects on the endangered Okaloosa darter. This darter is found almost exclusively on the Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

We have been working to aid the recovery of the darter through threat identification and restoration. One stream reach in particular, East Turkey Creek, has demonstrated potential water quality problems. The influence of adjacent land uses, including a wastewater spray field, is being evaluated

through a comprehensive water quality assessment and fish response investigation. Data will be used to adapt management strategies to address water quality issues to further the recovery of the Okaloosa darter.



Turkey Creek on Eglin Air Force Base. Photo by Michelle Tongue.

Submitted by Jon Hemming, Panama City, Florida, Ecological Services Field Office



15,000 pounds of rusty, scrap metal was removed from the overgrown vegetation and loaded for transport. The metal was remnant waste from a construction project completed more than 10 years ago. Photo by Landon Loveall.

Morgan Brake NWR conducts spring clean-up

In early June, the staff of Morgan Brake National Wildlife Refuge removed old scrap and other waste materials from the refuge. A roll-out dumpster was delivered by a local waste management facility, and a scrap metal recycler was located. What seemed like a quick task, with only a small amount of materials to dispose of, quickly turned into something else. It seemed as if every piece of vegetation was hiding another pile which was hastily trashed in years past. Discarded materials included items left behind when the property was converted from a commercial fish hatchery to a refuge some 15 years ago, and other items, such as old well piping, augers, and metal I-beams, that polluted the property for years. Taking ownership of the areas and working as a team ensured some 19,000 pounds of trash and debris along with 85,712 pounds of scrap metal were removed from the compounds. The entire project was completed in seven work days, utilizing

approximately 210 man hours. Revenues from the scrap metal will enhance the refuge's recycling program, which in turn will conserve resources, increase efficiency, and reduce operational costs keeping with Environmental Management Systems practices. Since the clean-up, several visitors have commented about the obvious improvement in the refuge's condition and appearance.



This small drain had been filled in years past with trash and scrap metal. All the debris pictured here was removed and hauled to a local waste management facility. Photo by Landon Loveall.

Submitted by Ron Fretwell, Morgan Brake National Wildlife Refuge, Cruger, Mississippi



Marilyn Knight encourages Gabrielle Manu as she paints a fish with both hands. Photo by Ken Warren.

FWS staffers teach kids fish printing

Three-year-old Rylan Ring proudly held up his white tee-shirt with a freshly-printed green and blue fish on it and said, "I did it!"

He was among about 30 pre-schoolers at the Children's Discovery Center (CDC) in Vero Beach, Florida, who learned the old Japanese art form of fish printing or "gyotaku" from five members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on May 29.

LeeAnn Kelso, Marilyn Knight, Debbie Devore and Kristi Yanchis of the South Florida Ecological Services Office (SFESO), partnered with John Galvez of the South Florida Fisheries Resource Office to treat the youngsters to a new experience.

"This was an opportunity to introduce the kids to something a little different," said Kristi. "It was a great way to introduce them to nature and the environment. Everybody had fun."

May was Wildlife Month at the Center. "We focused on wildlife because we want the kids to know and appreciate things about our Earth," said Linda Lane, the Center's assistant director. "We thought this would be a good project...especially dealing with real fish."

Gyotaku is a traditional form of Japanese fish printing that dates back to the mid-1800s. It was originated by fishermen as a way to record their catches.

While there's no way of knowing if its originators enjoyed gyotaku, there's no doubt that the kids at the CDC did. "We're ready for our shirts!" Summer Jenks proclaimed at the end of the session.

"These youngsters are South Florida's conservationists of tomorrow," said Paul Souza, field supervisor for the SFESO. More photos go to [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Ken Warren, South Florida Ecological Services Field Office, Vero Beach, Florida

Private John Allen NFH and its partners hold youth fishing rodeo

Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery partnered with Mississippi's Lower Delta Partnership (LDP) and the U.S. Forest Service to bring fishing opportunities to children of Mississippi's south delta.

Meg Cooper, LDP coordinator, enlisted assistance from Ricky Campbell, Pvt. John Allen's hatchery manager, to stock catfish in Blue Lake on the U.S. Forest Service's Delta National Forest, near Rolling Fork, Mississippi. The two federal partners, along with several local sponsors, helped LDP hold its Third Annual Youth Fishing Rodeo on June 14, for children ages 5 to 15.

About 35 catfishin' kids showed up to cast their lines, many of whom have not fished before nor spent much time in the forest. Some of the children actually caught fish, and each of them received a prize to take home. All the young anglers were accompanied by parents or other family members, and everyone, about 70 folks total, was treated to a good, old fashioned, hot-dog cookin' in the woods.

The LDP Youth Fishing Rodeo is the only event of its kind in a seven-county, low-income area of the state where most of the residents are minorities with limited opportunities. Mississippi's Lower Delta Partnership expressed appreciation to its federal partners for helping LDP promote the use of public lands and encourage young people to get outside and enjoy nature. More photos go to [Photo Album](#).



Not every child caught a catfish, instead little Laura Villarreal landed a brim that is just her size. Photo by Meg Cooper, LDP.

Submitted by Connie Dickard, Mississippi Field Office, Jackson, Mississippi



Southeastern bat. Photo by Brooke Slack, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Clark River National Wildlife Refuge's "Bat Blitz"

The Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge, Benton, Kentucky, in conjunction with the Frankfort Ecological Services Field Office, hosted a small-scale "Bat Blitz" during the week of June 23, 2008. The blitz provided bat enthusiasts from federal, state, and private companies the opportunity to combine efforts and mist-net for bats within the refuge boundaries. Participants included biologists from the Daniel Boone National Forest, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Inc., Murray State University, and WDH (William Hendricks) Ecological Services. Several bat species, including the eastern red bat, evening bat, eastern pipistrelle bat, northern long-eared bat,, and the Southeastern bat (State-endangered/Federal Species of

Concern) were captured. A transmitter was attached to the Southeastern bat, and radio telemetry was used to follow the bat to the roost tree---a rare and fortunate find! The four nights of mist-netting provided information about bat diversity on the refuge and strengthened partnerships between all groups involved.

Submitted by Carrie Lona, Frankfort Ecological Services Field Office, Kentucky

Ladies Bait Your Hook program a success!

The third Ladies Bait Your Hook program at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge was a great catch again this year - the picture tells all. Under the guidance of Kris Godwin (ninth from the left) 20 ladies, aged 10 to 77, had a great time hooking some pretty big catfish. Each participant caught least one fish. For many of the ladies, this was their first time fishing. More than 70 fish were caught and, with help from the guys (refuge staff and Friends Group), safely taken off the hook and filleted afterward.



Participants show off their catch of the day. Photo by Henry Sansing.

Submitted by Andrea Dunstan, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi



Dr. Mark Conrad, pastor of Turning Point at Calvary, finds out that alligators really do smell like corn chips. Photo by Alison Rauschenberger.

North Florida Ecological Services Office connects children with nature

On June 28, Heath Rauschenberger of the North Florida Ecological Services Office in Jacksonville, partnered with a live Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission alligator to connect kids with nature at a community event. Nearly 2,000 people attended Turning Point at Calvary Church's Second Annual God and Country Day in St. Augustine. Kids and parents learned alligators were one of the first imperiled species to be protected and recovered under the Endangered Species Act. They also received activity books and brochures about conservation, including information on migratory birds and imperiled species such as manatees and wood storks.

Submitted by Heath Rauschenberger, North Florida Ecological Services Field Office, Jacksonville, Florida



Five-year-old Joshua Hedges appears to have made a new friend in a 3.5 foot Florida alligator. Photo by Alison Rauschenberger.



Louisville, Kentucky Trout Unlimited Chapter President George Smith instructs a participant on the intricacies of tying a fly and prepping one's rod correctly. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

Terrific Trout Trek at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

On June 28, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery partnered with the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education (KAEE) to organize a 2008 Getaway Day at the hatchery. Getaway Days are tours and trips that KAEE helps to organize and implement with partnering agencies and organizations to help get people, whether KAEE members or not, outdoors and better connected to nature.

The hatchery's event, Terrific Trout Trek, gave visitors a chance to enjoy a guided, behind the scenes tour of the hatchery, including information provided by Environmental Education/Outreach Specialist Amanda Patrick and Project Leader James Gray. Participants also received free gifts, a homemade catered luncheon, and a beautiful afternoon of guided fly fishing provided by members of the Louisville chapter of Trout Unlimited. Seven people participated in the event.



Some of the fly fishing participants stop to pose for a cameo after enjoying the cool rippling waters of the Cumberland River. Photo by Walt Anderson, Trout Unlimited.

To learn more about KAEE and their work, please visit the following website:

<http://kentuckyassociationforenvironmentaleducation.org/?p=8>

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



Workshop participants try their hand at sustainable land usage through a fun and engaging hands-on exercise. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

Beans, corn, and cattle come to Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

On July 9 and 10, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery hosted a Food, Land, and People Workshop. In partnership with the Russell County Soil Conservation District and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the workshop featured a wide array of topics and activities centering on fostering a connection between agriculture and the environment. More than 35 teachers and other educators traveled from around the state to attend the event, and each person received a wide array of materials and stipends. Each participant received an \$150 stipend to help cover costs for the workshop, up to \$75 for materials, \$100 for completion of a final report, documentation of credit, lesson plans for Project Food, Land and People, and a tote bag. Most importantly, the educators shared two great days of networking and learning to take back to the classroom. A guided tour of the hatchery, along with a

close up look at a working cattle farm, rounded out the event.

The Smith family has been raising cattle in Russell County since the 1940's and was honored to work with the hatchery to plan a trip to the farm in support of environmental education and agriculture.



Some of local cattle farmer Charles Smith's Angus cattle. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



A great day for fishing! Photo by Frank Parauka.

Kids fishing clinic attracts new anglers

The Service's Panama City, Florida Field Office assisted the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission in the twelfth annual Kids Fishing Clinic held at the Panama City Mariana on June 7. The event attracted over 350 eager youthful anglers who learned about fish habitat, fishing ethics, knot-tying, casting, and water safety. After completing the learning stations, each child received a free fishing rod and reel, a tackle box and bait. Then, they tested their newly acquired angling skills in the bay waters. The weather was great, and it was a fun day for all.

Submitted by Frank Parauka, Panama City Field Office, Florida

It's a creepy crawly affair at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

Are you one of the many individuals who are afraid of snakes? Whether friend or foe, snakes are truly one of nature's most fascinating creatures, and this was proven by the large crowd for a Venomous Snakes of Kentucky program held last month at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. Through the generosity of South Kentucky Rural Electric Coop Marketing Director and Friends of Wolf Creek NFH Member Alan Coffey, the hatchery hosted biologists Jeff Hohman and Joe Settles, who work for East Kentucky Power Coop. Through their use of humor and fact, the program proved to be a resounding success. Each visitor experienced a hands-on, engaging adventure into the life and world of snakes. The importance of snakes to our ecosystem, instructions for dealing with snakes, and respect for their environment were discussed. Visitors got a chance to learn more and overcome many misconceptions and fears. The program was a resounding success and was one of the best yet for the hatchery.



Participants are able to touch and examine a copperhead up close as the snake is tubed by Biologist Jeff Hohman. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Volunteer Don Smith "greeted" one of the sneaky snake visitors. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

Friends Group --

No story submitted -- check back next month

Hats Off --



Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne, Volunteer Jack Webb, and Take Pride in America Executive Director Katie Loois. Department of Interior photo.

John "Jack" Webb recognized as outstanding individual volunteer at Take Pride In America Awards ceremony

John "Jack" Webb, a volunteer at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, was honored by Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne at the 2008 Take Pride in America National Awards ceremony Friday, July 18, in Washington, D.C. Jack and 14 other individuals and groups from across the country were recognized for their outstanding contributions to local, state, and federal public lands.

Jack Webb, is a "jack of all trades" and has used his talents as a carpenter, plumber, fundraiser, mechanic, landscaper, electrician and artist, volunteering 1,027 hours at Okefenokee NWR over an eight-month period in 2007. The Okefenokee NWR in Folkston, Georgia, is an estimated 700 square miles in size. The beautiful swamp suffers from natural lightening strikes endangering the swamp's natural habitat and destroying recreational facilities. When the refuge's bookstore closed due to fire

danger, Jack designed a souvenir T-Shirt which helped generate \$25,000 in funding for the Refuge. In an effort to educate the public on preserving and recreationally using the Okefenokee NWR, Jack designed and constructed an elaborate mobile educational exhibit, saving the refuge over \$10,000. Jack led teams to help rebuild canoe shelters and install toilets in the remote wilderness only accessible by a boat through canals and groomed canoe routes. Jack also used primitive tools to keep environmental impact to a minimum. For the past 22 years Jack has donated more than 10,000 hours, saving the refuge the cost of hiring a skilled employee. He has saved the refuge more than \$500,000 in labor costs and donations he secured.

Take Pride in America is a national service initiative authorized by Congress to promote the appreciation and stewardship of public lands. Take Pride in America is active in all 50 states, has partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations, and features Clint Eastwood as its national spokesman. For more information, visit <http://www.takepride.gov/index.html>.

Submitted by Gracie Gooch, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Folkston, Georgia

Alabama student places fifth in National Wildlife Refuge Association's first Youth Refuge Photo Contest

Ms. Sue Zupko, teacher of gifted and talented students at J.E. Williams Elementary School in Huntsville, Alabama, brought her classes to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge this winter to learn about natural resources and wildlife photography. Students were allowed to photograph captive wildlife, including a red-tailed hawk, corn snake, and Midland brown snake. They were also taken to two scenic locations on the refuge. One of her students, Liam Coddington, won fifth place in the Junior Youth category of the first annual National Wildlife Refuge Association Youth Photography Contest. Liam's image, called "Trees," can be viewed on the NWRA's website at <http://www.refugenet.org/contest/2008YouthWinners.html>

Submitted by *Bill Gates, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Decatur, Alabama*

Photo Album --

Cache River staff helps nursing home residents make memories -- more photos -- All photos by Karen Graves.



Billy Culbreath and Lessie had an understanding. She caught 'em and he took 'em off! Photo by Karen Graves.



Johnny catches fish so fast it's hard for Dillion Dewitt to keep up.



Billy and Angas, new friends are life's greatest gift.



A great day at a fishing hole!

Gone fishin' -- more photos



Andrew Hilsdon shows off his stringer of fish. Photo by Karen Graves.



Andrew Hilsdon reels in the BIG ONE!!! Photo by Karen Graves.



Grandma, you're the greatest. Photo by Karen Graves.



I think I have time for a quick nap. Photo by Karen Graves.



Project Leader Keith Weaver hands out prizes. Photo by Brandon McNew.

FWS staffers teach kids fish printing -- more photos

Kristi Yanchis (adult) and Shahd Alsayed display a freshly-printed t-shirt. Photo by Ken Warren.



John Galvez looks on as Debbie Devore shows Devan Snow how to paint. Photo by Ken Warren.

Private John Allen NFH and its partners hold youth fishing rodeo -- more photos

Proud daddy, Oscar Clark, helps his kids, Colby (left) and Madyson, show off their catfish catch. Photo by Meg Cooper, LDP.



Each young angler received a prize at the Third Annual LDP Youth Fishing Rodeo. Photo by Meg Cooper, LDP.



Mississippi delta girl Latoya Bullock got a new kite to take home from the LDP fishing rodeo. Photo by Meg Cooper, LDP.

Balancing act: watershed and endangered species protection requires choices between resources -- more photos



This infiltration pond acts like a giant sponge and consists of engineered soil, sand, and gravel with an under-drain system. Photo by Wes King.



Service biologist Jimmy Rickard holding dog-toothed violets. Photo by Pete Pattavina.

Visitor Services --

Fantastic fishing at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery



A view of the crowd at the derby.
Photo by Terri Halliwell.

Months of planning and hard work brought a day filled with fantastic fishing, smiling faces, jumping trout, and memories as Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery celebrated National Fishing and Boating Week with the 22nd Annual Catch a Rainbow Kids Fishing Derby. The event, started in 1986, has blossomed into one of the largest events of its kind in the country. Total attendance for this year's event was more than 4,000 people, including 1,650 kids.

With plenty to see and do, the event is designed as a fun-filled way to get kids, aged 1 through 15 years, outdoors. Along with the fishing, several booths and activities were provided for participants' enjoyment, including a boat simulator provided by FLW Outdoors and archery sports through the local Ducks Unlimited chapter. Everyone also enjoyed all the hot dogs, sodas, bottled water, cotton candy, and popcorn they could eat, and each child was given a goodie bag full of treats. Each derby participant, aged 5 years and up, had a choice of a rod and reel, a tackle box, a sleeping bag, or a tent. The younger children enjoyed their own special prizes at the kiddie pool area.

The annual derby event was made possible through the generous support and contributions of many local, regional and national sponsors and businesses. This year, 20 major sponsors gave at least \$1,000 in donations of cash or items, while countless other organizations gave of their time and resources. The event also included the participation of over 130 volunteers, making it a true example of the positive benefits of partnering. Through such teamwork, an event with a value of \$41,203.26 occurred with little or cost to any one agency as donations totaled \$40,590.50.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



A derby participant proudly displays his catches of the day and is all smiles! Photo by Terri Halliwell.



Wolf Creek NRI friend Goldie the Goldfish wishes one derby participant a happy fishing day. Wolf Creek NRI Volunteer Sharon Smith is pictured with Goldie. Photo by Terri Halliwell.



A young derby participant proudly receives the trophy for catching the largest fish in her age division. Photo by Terri Halliwell.



Several derby participants walked away with new bicycles. One lucky winner is shown wheeling her prize away. Photo by Terri Halliwell.

Wage Grade Profile --

Brad Marler: Norfolk National Fish Hatchery



Brad Marler. Photo by Ken Boyles.

Brad Marler, motor vehicle operator for the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery in Mountain Home, Arkansas, enjoys fishing and talking with people. His job at the hatchery involves raising fish and helping the public – a great fit.

“The most rewarding thing about my job is seeing the public benefit from what we are doing,” says Brad. “Often, visitors will stop and talk, and tell us how much they appreciate our work.”

Brad is involved in all aspects of raising fish at the hatchery, as well as truck and grounds maintenance. In 1998, he joined the Youth Conservation Corps and worked at the hatchery for two summers, feeding the fish and maintaining the grounds. Now, Brad has been a fulltime employee for 8 years.

Brad and his wife, Sarah, have a two-year-old-son, Isaac, and are expecting another child soon. In his spare time, Brad enjoys hunting, as well as fishing. He also raises cows and calls himself a “hobby farmer.”

Submitted by Elsie Davis, External Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia

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